Linguistics, M.A.

Graduate programs in the Department of Linguistics emphasize theory and research. Students interested in non-university careers also may take courses in applied linguistics and other fields as an option in the M.A. program.

Iowa’s Department of Linguistics has particular strengths in phonology, syntax, and second language acquisition (SLA).

The phonology curriculum emphasizes current theoretical perspectives, including optimality theory, and the collection, description, and interpretation of novel phonological and phonetic data. Courses feature extensive work in data analysis and problem solving, focusing on construction and evaluation of phonological theories, particularly in light of new empirical data.

The syntax curriculum includes the dual emphases of empirical and theoretical perspectives. It offers a variety of foundational courses that build analytic and argumentation skills, as well as specialized coursework on current issues in syntactic theory. The courses consist of intensive work in problem solving. They combine discovery and description of new linguistic data with exploration of the implications of such facts in testing and constructing syntactic theories.

The curriculum in second language acquisition includes courses that provide an overview and analysis of current SLA research. Work focuses on experimental research investigating the influence of the first language, environmental and contextual factors, and related topics.